

July 2006

RE: Direct Loan Tools for Windows, Release 6.0

Dear DL Tools Users:

We are pleased to announce the availability of Direct Loan (DL) Tools for Windows, Release 6.0. DL Tools is a multi-year Windows-based application designed to provide the following functionality related to all Direct Loan schools' software:

- Compare the School Account Statement (SAS) Report to loans and actual disbursements recorded in EDEExpress or an external file, and/or compare the SAS to the DL Tools Cash Database.
- Print the SAS in a readable format.
- Track Cash Receipts (drawdowns) and Refunds of Cash for Direct Loans.
- Rebuild your Direct Loan origination and disbursement records in EDEExpress using an automated process.

DL Tools processes data for multiple cycles. Release 6.0 contains Rebuild, Cash Management, and Compare functionalities for the 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 cycles.

All Direct Loan schools can use the Compare and Cash Management functionality. The Rebuild function can be used by schools to rebuild Direct Loan module records in EDEExpress for Windows databases. Non-EDEExpress users can export data from a rebuilt EDEExpress database to recreate non-EDEExpress loans or databases. For information on exporting from EDEExpress to an external system and creating file formats, see Volume III of the *2006-2007 COD Technical Reference*.

One way to meet the Quality Assurance requirement in the Direct Loan program is to run the Disbursement Measurement Tool Report (available in the U.S. Department of Education's DL Tools software), as well as certain Direct Loan lists (available in EDEExpress). Tolerances can be applied when running these reports. Tolerances are guidelines you set for evaluating the effectiveness of your school's Direct Loan processes and procedures.

The Disbursement Measurement Tool Reports and Direct Loan lists with tolerances assist schools with monitoring current operations, procedures, and program status. Your school decides which reports to use, when to run them, and what action to take as a result. You can use them to review progress as part of a continuous improvement plan.

If you do not use EDEExpress, you can still use DL Tools to assist in reconciling. You can import cash, loan, or disbursement data from your external Direct Loan system into DL Tools and compare your data to the SAS.

Important DL Tools Comparison Reports Note: DL Tools Loan and Disbursement Comparison Reports **are designed to be run using the SAS Reports with YTD detail, *not* monthly detail.** See **Direct Loan Bulletin (DLB) 02-36** for information about default settings and SAS option selections. You can change your report options (YTD detail, for example) by contacting your COD School Relations customer service representative at **800/848-0978; TDD/TTY 800/461-7010** or by e-mail at CODSupport@acs-inc.com or by accessing the COD Web site at cod.ed.gov.

How to Get the Software and Documentation

You can download DL Tools Release 6.0 and related user documentation from the FSAdownload Web site, located at fsadownload.ed.gov.

Instructions for downloading DL Tools are located in the “Downloading Documentation and Software from the FSAdownload Web Site” section of the *DL Tools for Windows Release 6.0 Installation Guide*. If you have trouble opening the FSAdownload Web site, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at **800/330-5947; TDD/TTY 800/511-5806** or by e-mail at CPSSAIG@ed.gov.

Note: Some organizations block their staff from downloading programs from Internet sites. If you have trouble downloading, try again later. If you are still unable to download, contact your technical support staff to ensure that you have full download rights.

Important Installation Alert

To install DL Tools for Windows, Release 6.0 in Windows 2000 or Windows XP, you must be an Administrator on your workstation. If you are not an Administrator, you will receive a warning when you try to install DL Tools. After an Administrator has installed DL Tools, you can run the software as a member of the Power Users group. If your database is on a network server, you must be a Power User or higher on the network (or domain) as well as on your workstation. There are no workarounds for these Windows-rights issues. Consult with your school’s technical department if you receive a warning that an Administrator must install the DL Tools software.

If You Have Technical Support Questions

If you have questions about DL Tools, such as installation issues, software problem resolution, software functionality, or if you need technical assistance, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support.

You can reach CPS/SAIG Technical Support, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (CT), at **800/330-5947; TDD/TTY 800/511-5806**. You can also send e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions to CPSSAIG@ed.gov. A representative will respond within 24 business hours.

You can also post questions regarding EDEExpress on our e-mail listserv, FSATECH. FSATECH is an e-mail listserv for technical questions about the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid systems, software, and mainframe products.

Note: Make sure you include your telephone number in your message in case we need additional information. We will research your question and post our response to the listserv so that everyone can benefit from the information.

For more information about FSATECH, including how to subscribe, go to fsa4schools.ed.gov, click "Listservs/Mailing Lists" on the left menu, and click the "FSATech" link.

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DL Tools for Windows, Release 6.0

DL Tools for Windows Release 6.0 can be installed as an upgrade to DL Tools Release 5.0, which enables you to carry 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 DL Tools data forward from your Release 5.0 database.

To upgrade your DL Tools database from Release 5.0 to Release 6.0, run the Stand Alone Custom installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Workstation installation option (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

If you are installing the DL Tools software for the first time, you must choose the Stand Alone Full installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Network Server and Workstation installation options (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

Important Back-up Note: You cannot access 2003-2004 data in your DL Tools database after you upgrade from Release 5.0 to Release 6.0. We strongly recommend you create a back-up copy of your Release 5.0 database (DLT.mdb) before upgrading to Release 6.0, in the event that you need to access your 2003-2004 data using an earlier version of DL Tools on another PC.

For more information on installing DL Tools Release 6.0, see the *DL Tools for Windows Release 6.0 Installation Guide*, available for download from fsadownload.ed.gov.

2006-2007 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools)

For record layouts, report mock-ups, and other additional details on using DL Tools Release 6.0, see the *2006-2007 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools)*, available for download from fsadownload.ed.gov.

Product Updates for Section 508 Compliancy

DL Tools, Release 6.0 contains updates to software grids, field labels, and help text to ensure compatibility with screen reader technology used by the visually impaired, in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Screen reader software cannot interpret color shading in DL Tools software entry fields or directly read the contents of software grid cells. To accommodate these restrictions, DL Tools users will notice the following major changes:

- All software fields that are shaded yellow to indicate they are required will now also display a “-R” after the software label. The “-R” indicates the field is required.

- All software grids now display “floating” text descriptions of the contents of grid cells when cells are selected. The text appears one cell above (or one cell below, for cells in the first line of the grid) the selected cell. The text lists Row number, Column title, and (if applicable) the current Value. Clicking once in a cell, or using the Tab key or arrow keys to move to a cell, displays the text. Clicking a second time hides the text.

The first time you log into DL Tools, the default user ID and password is SYSADMIN. The system then prompts you to change the default password by entering a new password and verifying it. Floating text is always enabled for the SYSADMIN user ID and always appears on the Startup Information dialog box. For all users other than SYSADMIN, floating text is disabled by default. To enable it, select the Enable 508 Grid Functionality? checkbox on the Security Users dialog box. To disable the floating text, go to **Tools, Setup, Security Users** and create a new user ID and password. Exit DL Tools, and then log back in with your new user ID and password.

Note: Users will always see the “-R” text added to software fields.

Product Enhancements

In addition to the Section 508 compliancy updates noted in the previous section, the following product enhancements are available in DL Tools Release 6.0:

General Changes

- **Program Year 2003-2004 Removed:** We removed DL Tools functionality applicable to program year 2003-2004.
- **Program Year 2006-2007 Added:** We added DL Tools functionality applicable to program year 2006-2007.
- **Program Year Label Added to DL Tools Toolbar:** We added a field label titled “Program Year” to the DL Tools toolbar to the left of the Program Year selection box.
- **Program Year Added to the Menu Bar:** We added Program Year as a menu selection. With this change you can now update the Program Year from the menu option or on the DL Tools toolbar.

Import

- **Import Files Automatically Backed Up:** DL Tools automatically backs up your files rather than prompting you to back them up when 1000 files of the same message class already exist in the import directory. If DL Tools determines that 1000 files of the same message class already exist, the software creates a backup subdirectory called “BACKUP” in your existing Data directory and automatically moves the files to the subdirectory. This prevents previously imported files from being overwritten when you import or export new files.

Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)

- **Valid Transaction Date Range Updated:** Release 6.0 allows only the transaction date range 6/22/2005 to 10/27/2008 when a 2006-2007 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB) is imported. The transaction date range for the 2005-2006 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB) is still 6/22/2004 to 10/27/2007, and for the 2004-2005 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB), the date range is still 6/22/2003 to 10/27/2006.

SAS Loan and Disbursement Detail Report

- **Date Range Field Always Displayed:** If no disbursement date range is entered in the Print dialog box for the SAS Loan and Disbursement Detail report, the “Date Range” label now prints on the report without a date range value.

Disbursement Detail Comparison Report

- **EDExpress/SAS Comparison Logic Updated:** DL Tools now compares the disbursements recorded in EDExpress to the corresponding disbursements in the SAS by doing a one-to-one comparison of each disbursement using the disbursement number, sequence number, disbursement date, and disbursement amounts. In prior versions of DL Tools, the disbursement date for a given loan ID and disbursement number in the SAS was compared against the disbursement date in EDExpress of the highest disbursement sequence number with Disbursement Type Q for that same loan ID and disbursement number. If no Disbursement Type Q transaction existed for the loan ID and disbursement number in EDExpress, DL Tools compared the disbursement date for a given loan ID and disbursement number in the SAS against the disbursement date of the initial disbursement (sequence number 01) for the Loan ID and disbursement number.

Disbursement Measurement Tool Report

- **Disbursement Sequence Numbers Added:** The disbursement sequence number for each disbursement now prints on the Disbursement Measurement Tool Report in addition to all other fields currently printed.

- **All PLUS Borrower Names Displayed:** The names of all PLUS borrowers for each student now print on the Disbursement Measurement Tool report. For example, if a student has one PLUS Loan with the mother as the borrower and another PLUS loan with the father as the borrower, the report prints the name of both the mother and the father.

Message Classes

- DL Tools Release 6.0 was updated to allow for the import of 2006-2007 fixed-length SAS Loan Level and Disbursement Level file message classes. The new message classes are:

DSDF07OP Fixed Length – Disbursement Level

DSL07OP Fixed Length – Loan Level

DL Tools Benchmarking

We performed benchmarking tests on the DL Tools for Windows, Release 6.0 software to determine how it operates in certain operating environments. These tests were all completed on a Pentium 1000 MHz with 512 MB RAM.

Imports

The benchmarking results for DL Tools import files are as follows:

- Records were imported into an empty database.
- The Benchmarking Volume is the type and number of records that were imported in the test.
- The Average Time Elapsed column indicates the measurement of time starting when the user clicks OK in the Import dialog box and the import process begins through the time the import statistics are displayed.

Imports

Component	Benchmarking Volume	Operating System	Average Time Elapsed
Rebuild	1000 originations 4000 disbursements	Windows 2000	4 minutes, 5 seconds
		Windows XP	4 minutes, 3 seconds
School Account Statement (SAS)	2 Cash Summary 8 Disbursement Summary 100 Cash Detail 200 Loan Detail (loan level) 800 Loan Detail (disbursement activity level)	Windows 2000	4 seconds
		Windows XP	4 seconds

Reports

The benchmarking results for DL Tools Internal Ending Cash Balance Reports and Loan Detail Comparison are as follows:

- The Benchmarking Volume is the number of records and approximate number of pages that were printed in the test.
- The Average Time Elapsed column indicates the length of time starting when the user clicks OK in the DL Tools Print dialog box through the time the operating system (Windows 2000/XP) Print dialog box appears.

Reports

Report	Benchmarking Volume	Operating System	Average Time Elapsed
2006-2007 Internal Ending Cash Balance Report	200 Cash 1200 Disbursements 6 pages	Windows 2000	2 seconds
		Windows XP	2 seconds
Loan Detail Comparison	50 loans 6 pages	Windows 2000	3 seconds
		Windows XP	3 seconds

Reminders

Back Up Your Database Weekly

You should back up your DL Tools database (DLT.mdb) regularly so you do not lose your data. We recommend that you back up your files after each major update to your database (for example, entering or importing data into DL Tools), or at least once a week. You should also back-up your 2004-2005, 2005-2006, or 2006-2007 EDEExpress database before using DL Tools' Rebuild feature for a particular cycle.

DL Tools does not include a backup utility. You must use your own backup software. Be sure to test your backup software regularly to verify that it can reliably restore your data.